

NEL/CPS CONSTRUCTION CAREER ACADEMY BOARD MEETING

February 8, 2011

NEL/CPS CONSTRUCTION CAREER ACADEMY

CONFERENCE ROOM- 4 SHARPE DRIVE, CRANSTON, RI 02920

12:00 P.M. Executive Session

Public Session Immediately Following

MINUTES

The following members were present: Mr. Traficante, Mr. Nero, Mr. Cardi, Mrs. McFarland, Ms. DeSimone, Mr. Rampone and Dr. Leone. (Mr. Bowling arrived at 12:20 p.m.) Others present were: Dr. Silvia, Mr. Votto, Mr. Scaffardi, Mrs. Dzekevich, and Mrs. Corcelli.

Chairman Traficante called the meeting to order. At 12:02 p.m. a motion was made by Dr. Leone to go into Executive Session: pursuant to RI State Laws PL 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel and PL 42-46-5 (a) (2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation and seconded by Mr. Rampone. All were in favor.

Chairman Traficante reconvened public session at 12:15 p.m. The roll was called; a quorum was present. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

A motion was made by Dr. Leone to seal the minutes of Executive Session. This was seconded by Mr. Rampone. All were in favor.

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) Approved – January 11, 2011. A motion was made by Mrs. McFarland to approve the minutes of the January 11th meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Rampone. All were in favor.

Public Acknowledgements/Communications

There were none.

Public Hearing

- a. Students (Agenda/Non-agenda Items)**
- b. Members of the Public (Agenda Matters Only)**

There were no speakers.

Chairman Traficante stated – if there are no objections from the board I would like to go directly to the second resolution because Dr. Leone has a personal appointment as well as Dr. Silva. Dr. Silvia has a meeting with President DePasquale on behalf of the Charter School.

Business

Sponsored by the Entire Board

RESOLUTION

NO. 02-2-11 – RESOLVED, to appropriate the transfer of \$79,928.00 from the New England Laborers'/Cranston Public Schools Construction Career Academy cumulative fund balance to the Cranston Public Schools in order to fully fund all high school sports

that existed in the 2010-2011 school budget with the exception of freshmen football, baseball, and basketball at Cranston High School East and Cranston High School West.

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Cardi and seconded by Mr. Rampone. Discussion.

Chairman Traficante stated – I asked the Athletic Director to be here today but apparently he hasn't arrived so let me start and I am sure Peter can fill in the gaps. Presently we have a cumulative surplus of \$259,329. Now how did we arrive at that particular surplus? Number one, through very aggressive out of district recruiting and Dr. Mike is responsible. Should you have a question in that area Dr. Mike can respond. That's number one and secondly, very aggressive acquisition of grants. The grants fell in basically three major areas, AEP, World of Work and our Credit Recovery Diversified Educational Campus/Odyssey Program. Of course, those particular grants included salaries and revenue for rent, materials and supplies which saved us dollars in our budget which also helped build the reserve up, that's number two. Several students as you know continue to participate in athletics from the Charter Academy. Several are very good athletes and they are allowed by law and by the Rhode Island Interscholastic League to participate in athletic programs from their sending districts. In this case Cranston East or Cranston West or any other district. We have had a great number of our kids participate in those particular programs. I have spent twenty-five years of my life on the athletic field, as a player and as a coach and I know first-hand that

many valuable lessons that are learned on the athletic field and by the way I might say lessons that cannot be acquired in the classroom or even at home. Lessons that have life-long values, carryover values. We have a situation here today that I am going to let Peter fill you in. Once again the athletic program may be dismantled because we have to abide by the Performance Audit language resulting from the Caruolo action I am going to break here and have Peter explain what has occurred and what the impact has been.

Mr. Nero stated – as you know after the Supreme Court decision going back two years ago and even prior to that when we walked out of court, I believe it was the end of July in 2008. The judge ordered that a team be assembled from both sides, both the city-side and from the school-side to perform an extensive Performance Audit in the district. At that time they asked me, as I was the assistant superintendent at that time, to kind of head that in terms of the district-wide and that was led by Tom Sweeney who is a former retired superintendent and Sal Augieri who is a former superintendent from Westerly. I literally spent about six to eight months deftly going into the district and at the end they...in fact I just dropped one off yesterday to Dave Abbott at the Department of Ed, we got back about a year or so ago the Performance Audit. The Performance Audit suggested several things that were a later way to codify in the legal document called the Consent Order. In that was the blueprint for where we should go in terms of the cuts we should make and I will tell you that sports got hit rather heavily during our negotiations last year with the city I felt as though the sports budget,

and I don't have all the figures in front of me from last years' presentation, which was about \$600 and 30 or 40 thousand dollars. They told us we should cut 25% from our sports budget. Now I don't know how they came up with that number. I think they were somewhat arbitrary on that because I said to them, I could understand other cuts that we were making but we only had a \$650,000 budget and they were cutting out a big chunk. So we had to cut roughly \$130,000 out of the budget and last year my recommendations and you know it's never...I said this earlier today, we had several meetings on this and I hear the same thing all the time. I don't want to cut but I really don't have a choice. Last year when we did this we cut a variety of sports \$130,000 and the end result was that as I call them, the knight in shining armor came and that was the Charter School. What happened was we ended up cutting last year out of the budget which is no longer in approximately \$32,000 which was freshmen sports. Now, that was baseball, basketball and football. We do run freshmen football but it is not at the expense of the school district or as a result of the Charter School or any other grant. It is because prior to the opening of the season the kids go out and they do fundraising and they were able to raise the money and again for freshmen sports, it's not a large chunk for each freshmen football team but it's enough where they have to go out and fundraise. So we are not running it in baseball and we're not running it in basketball this year, it's just in football and that is because it is a large number. We also cut intermurals out last year which is again about \$13,000. When I flushed out the budget this year

and I was looking at it I knew I had to make about \$84,000 in cuts to get that \$130,000. Last year when the Charter School saved us we had all these sports in place and as you recall I asked the committee, I think it was in September, that they had to put on the table consideration as we were going into sports last year if they were going to make any additional cuts. There were things that were proposed by one of the School Committee member regarding the use of paying people to hold the sticks and whatnot at football games. The way it kind of flushed out we got about an \$84,000 issue this year for sports. We have still sequestered at least \$5,000 I am going to say in escrow that we probably won't be using from the donation last year from the Charter School and also from the Veolia Corporation. So as a result, if I have \$5,000 and I have to cut \$84,000 the net result I am looking for is \$79,928. Mike starting talking to me a couple of weeks ago about the possibility of making this happen. If we are going to vote on that today I will recuse myself as I did last year and I do that because I am the person cutting it and I also feel like a real jerk so to speak. Mike was on the athletic field a lot longer than I was but I certainly enjoyed playing baseball, football and I threw shot-put at Cranston East in my tenure there so it is always difficult for me. The dilemma that I would have faced this year is everybody coming to the microphone, including my son who is a swimmer at Cranston High School West, which would have made it most difficult in my house. Again, it's not pleasurable that I would have to make these cuts. It is fortunate that if this body votes to approve them then the case will be then we would be completely restored to what we have this year, the

level of sports and the level of activities we have this year.

Chairman Traficante stated – before I approached Peter on this subject I had a long conversation with Mr. Armand Sabitoni, the General Secretary Treasurer of LIUNA and as you probably recall Mr. Sabitoni was a former teacher in the Cranston School Department at Western Hills. He was also a former basketball coach, great athlete in his own right in high school and in college. He was very supportive of this idea therefore I discussed it with Peter and I contacted each of you board members prior to doing anything to make sure you were aware of the direction we were going to go in. I didn't receive any comments back so I am assuming that it sat well with you. I am going to say it again, as you know; athletics is the lifeblood of many of these kids. It keeps them not only in school but helps them maintain their academic average because they have to remain academically eligible to play in sports. This acquires, as I said before, some lifelong skills and tremendous carryover values and in some cases where the kid is exceptional, there are scholarships for college as well. It's a very valuable and important overall program of our school department. Basically what I am asking this committee to do is maintain that generosity and help save the sports program again this year.

Dr. Silvia stated – when I was director here we set money aside or earmarked money for sports only because at that time we thought we would have enough money to build or extend the building in order to have facilities for sports but that didn't turn out. So what you are going to vote on today is not taking theoretically not taking away

from the agency, it's something that we are going to use towards sports on a yearly basis as we did last year. So the money that you're going to vote on today was earmarked for sports and don't forget our students in this school do play sports in other schools.

Chairman Traficante stated – so that it is clear, I am giving you a breakdown, that came from the athletic department as well as the superintendent's office (attached for the record – handout #1). This is the breakdown for both Cranston East and Cranston West and it identifies per line item as to where the money will be allocated to and any further comments or questions?

Mrs. McFarland stated – I just have a couple of questions that I wanted to ask. The first question is how many students does this actually assist in keeping these programs together. How many here.

Chairman Traficante stated – I know there are several here, at least 6 or 7 here and within the other two schools.

Mr. Nero stated – the other night I was watching the combined Cranston Hockey team play and one of the starters for the hockey team, she goes to school here.

Mrs. McFarland stated – and I want to clearly state that I support this because of all that has been said, academically when kids have other activities they excel better, they're able to go on to higher learning, and they are able to be disciplined in not only doing their academics but to be involved in associations and groups with other kids. My concern is that we are continuing to do this and at what point do we need to look at a more structured approach and I did say this last year as well. That we need to look at a more structured approach to

keep this in line and one of the suggestions I would make either here as well as the School Committee level is that we need to start looking at our recreational facilities and start looking at some fee structure of using them within the city. We continuously...we're not actually doing that to raise some funding as well as making sure we're doing some structuring advertising at those facilities. We allow a lot of entities to do it to take it on their own and to use those funding sources for themselves, for their individual leagues or their individual groups, but those are our city facilities and we are using advertising there and other structures and maybe we need to look at that being some other type or form of utilizing...Warwick actually charges a fee for those groups to utilize those fields.

Chairman Traficante stated – before you propose that Paula make sure you get the city onboard because they own these fields and facilities therefore the monies that are generated, if they do agree, comes back to the athletic budget.

Mrs. McFarland stated – it's the only way to fund it because it is interesting to me that I also have seen and I mentioned this to the superintendent, that we have our elected leaders attending all of the award ceremonies in the city but not of those elected leaders are actually funding sports within the city. I speak from my heart when it comes to issues in the city and if you're going to attend them, you should support them. It's always great to advocate yourself in that arena and make it show like you support them but obviously we need the funding sources to actually continue those opportunities for kids in the city. So, it would be nice if I saw some of those elected leaders

who did attend those events to actually help in supporting this and maybe our budget wouldn't need to support as much to it.

All were in favor with the exception of Superintendent Nero who recused from this vote. The resolution passed.

Personnel

RESOLUTION

NO. 02-01-11 – RESOLVED, Whereas, there may be more qualified individuals who will apply for current positions, and

Whereas, certain positions became available after the teacher selection of August 17, 2010 and more senior teachers may elect to occupy these positions under Article XVI of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and

Whereas, funding for certain positions is not assured for the 2011-2012 school year, and as a result, more senior teachers could elect to take a current position, and

Whereas, positions occupied by retirees must be posted each year, and

Whereas, there may be changes in student distribution, and as a result, more senior teachers may take a current position, and

Whereas, positions must now be made available for more senior teachers who are scheduled to return from leave, and

Whereas, because of these concerns, and in accordance with Title 16 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, the Executive Director has recommended that the employment of certain teachers be terminated at the end of the 2011-2012 school year, and

Whereas, the Executive Director has sent prior notice to said teachers informing them of the specific reasons for their termination, and

Whereas, the Board of Directors has provided said teachers with the opportunity to be heard in Executive Session regarding their termination,

Be it RESOLVED that said teachers be terminated at the close of the school year under provisions of Title 16 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, and

Be it further RESOLVED that the Executive Director notify those teachers of the Board's action to terminate their employment.

Moved by Mrs. McFarland and seconded by Mr. Rampone. All were in favor.

Committee Reports/Reports/Updates

Executive Director's Report

Chairman Traficante stated – unfortunately Mr. Pecorelli could not be here today he is at a conference so Dr. Silvia will give his report as well as his own. (See handout #2).

Dr. Silvia stated – we will start with the School Activities Account – self-explanatory.

Funding – Dr. Silvia stated – we submitted a proposal to provide 22 students during the summer months with employment during a six week period. They will also have one day here with their portfolio and learning about work ethics before going out to work sites. The proposal total request was for \$40,624.70. That was submitted to the Summer Employment Opportunities for Youth Work Force Solutions. Out of that \$40,624.70, \$20,219.40 is going for salaries and benefits for the youth in the program. This is a typical program that we have conducted every year except last year when they didn't have enough funds to fund us. Twenty-two of our students will be working 20 hours per week and will be paid for it.

Nellie Mae Foundation

Dr. Silvia stated – we submitted a proposal on Friday extending our diversified educational campus. This campus was developed last year using dollars from The Rhode Island Foundation and what that meant was to be the first high school in the state to have classes from 7:30 in the morning to 8:30 in the evening. We want to build and keep building on that. In our proposal we requested \$78,000 in order to

ensure (in Massachusetts they call it Proficiency Based Pathways) which is equivalent to our Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR's). So what we need to do is we need to take all this expansion for the diversified educational campus and make sure that it fits into the district PBGR's. In order to do that we have to bring it in and this is going to help us do that using these funds, coordinating everything, expanding the services that we have now with Alternate Education being Virtual Learning and also learning through the learning packets which is self-paced. This is the first round of funding and will affect the entire school. What we have to do is just add a couple of teachers and monitor and then put together a presentation.

Dr. Silvia stated – Today we set up a meeting with Dr. DePasquale. We are looking at a couple of things at this point that I was going to be bringing back to this board with my official title as the Developing Director. Looking at and having researched the fact that it would be great for us to try to develop almost a fifth year and why do we want to go to the fifth year. Because some of our students, in order to prepare them for college, looking at a CCRI, 70% of the courses at CCRI are remedial so I am sure we can play a role in that. Once the diversified campus starts to take hold, I am looking to see if they will use us with the World of Work which they need to develop by state mandate and don't forget we developed World of Work programs for the last five years and actually provided the first initiative in the state of Rhode Island to do that. They have used our program as the

foundation to expand Career Pathways throughout the state theoretically through the Department of Labor. So today, thanks to Dr. Leone he set up an appointment for me to sit down with the Commissioner and “President” of CCRI Raymond DePasquale. So if we can provide that extra year we will have that as a prep going into CCRI for anyone in the area. I think we will be a great provider. Discussion ensued.

Rescheduled Meeting w/RIDE Officials Regarding Reauthorization
This meeting has been rescheduled to March 9th.

Board of Regents Meeting Held at Cranston High School West – (See handout #3)

Superintendent Nero stated – instead of doing what she had recommended which was come up with three different diplomas (of which I was not in favor of) but am glad the Commissioner announced the other night she was going to recommend to the Board of Regents that we stick with what we have right now but extend the deadline to the year 2014.

13. Old Business/New Business/Discussion
None.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the board the

meeting was adjourned. Moved by Mrs. McFarland and seconded by Mr. Rampone. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Traficante

Chairman